

edness of its nature. Then again it has been discussed upon a liberal basis, and in a moral aspect. Now, so far as either of these propositions are concerned, I am perfectly indifferent. I have no conscientious scruples about holding slaves. I am now connected with the institution to a limited extent, and have been ever since my boyhood, and shall remain so until the tenure is dissolved and broken by the voice of the people at the ballot box, upon the ratification of this Constitution. I have no complaint at all to allege against slavery or slaveholders for the tenure of this description of property. However, so far as Scripture authority has been adduced to justify slavery, I think by false interpretation, you can find Scripture for any doctrine you may desire or attempt to establish in ordinary life. Grant that slavery was recognized in a certain form and at different times in the Scriptures. That itself does not sanctify the institution for us; that of itself does not justify the tenure of slavery, when it can no longer be made valuable and useful to those who seek to control it. I leave that to the conscience of every man, whether he be a slaveholder or a non-slaveholder. That is a matter he must determine between himself and his God; and there I leave it.

But as a national institution, I deny that it ever had any political existence. I deny that it ever had any existence, political or domestic, but purely as a State institution. It is true, as has been stated here, that the right of property in slaves was recognized in the Constitution of the United States—that is a fact—and also by the State of Maryland, and the other States that are part and parcel of this Union, and controlled by the Constitution of the United States. And I hold that the State, in its sovereign capacity, has the right to control this institution in any manner its policy may dictate. If it is the interest, then, of the State of Maryland to abolish slavery at this particular time, it is right and just that it should be abolished. If the majority of the people of this State say that slavery shall no longer exist on the statute books of this State, or as a part of the organic law of the State, then it is right it should be abolished; if there is any truth in that ancient and quaint maxim—"the greatest good to the greatest number."

I said that no permanent peace could ever exist between the North and the South, so long as the institution of slavery was a disturbing element. I maintain that position to be true. Past experience shows that such a peace could not possibly exist, where there was such discordance of opinion and feeling upon a question of such vital importance. Why, sir, as far back as 1832, when the doctrine of nullification was rife in South Carolina, when the question of the tariff at that time was seized upon as the means by which this glorious Union was to be severed, slavery

was then the latent cause; the tariff was taken hold of only as a mere weapon. And why did they not succeed upon that question? Because the South was a divided country upon that question; they were not a unit upon the subject of the tariff. The State of Louisiana wanted protection for her sugar, and she would not join in that crusade against the General Government, and dissolve the Union. They found, then, that that hobby would not avail their purpose; and by the intervention of that stern old patriot, Andrew Jackson, the whole scheme was exploded and overthrown.

So the matter rested. Not, however, a final rest; but on the contrary a new agitation was commenced. Not on the part of the North, as has been said by gentlemen on the other side who have argued this question. Who, for one moment, ever paid any attention to those wild fanatics, Wendell Phillips, Theodore Parker, William Lloyd Garrison, and the whole tribe of abolitionists? Who among sensible men, ever respected their opinions? What harm could they do? Could they poison the minds of conservative men in the loyal States upon this question? Their only object was to keep up this agitation, and to aid the North in producing this conflict, for the purpose of breaking up this institution of slavery. There can be no question about that. But they were impotent as to numbers and capacity, and never could have brought about any such result by themselves.

I stated, as my second proposition, which I supported in this connection, that slavery is a support and material aid to the South in carrying on this rebellion. Let us for one moment refer to the statistics of slavery in the South. There are nearly four millions of slaves in the seceded States—or were. Say that one half of that number, two millions, are females; that leaves two millions of males. Suppose that you divide that number into three parts, and take off one-third for children, boys and old men. You have then left over a million of effective men, who can be mustered into the service and made soldiers to help to strike down this government. Or this one million, if not taken into the military service, and arrayed against this government, remain at home as producers, in the place of their masters and their masters' sons, who are able to enter the battle field; and who would necessarily have to be on their sugar and cotton plantations, if it were not for the fact that their negroes are there, and to that extent do what is necessary to carry on the rebellion. I think, therefore, that the proclamation of President Lincoln, freeing the slaves of the South, was a wise proposition so far as it relates to the weakening of the rebellion. I grant you that it can avail but little, unless the lines of the Federal army are extended over the South. But it had this effect; it became known throughout the